

Presentation to Regional Transportation Governance Commission

Pierce County Issues

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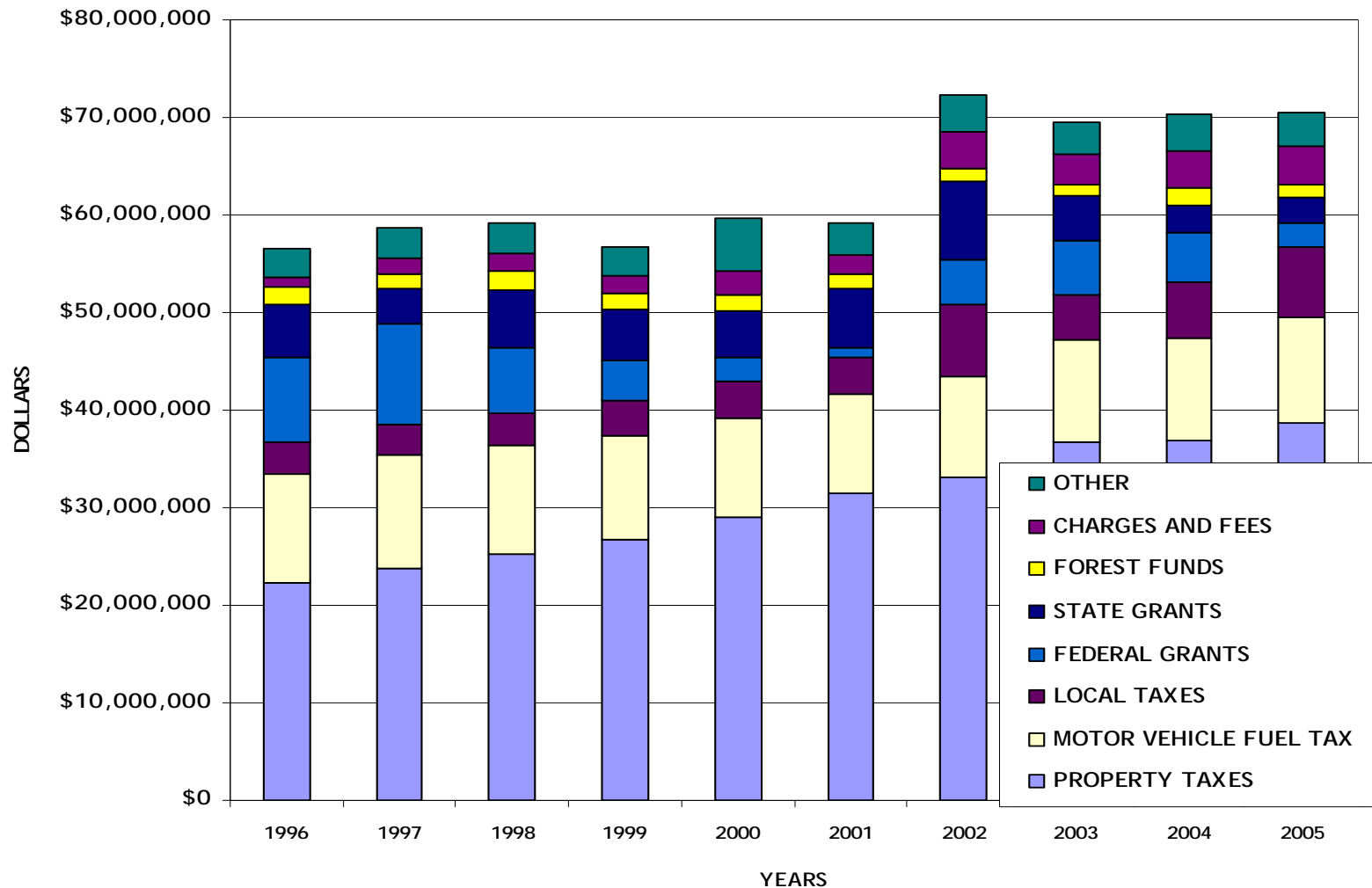
Who Are We?

- 550 employees
- Transportation service provider
 - 3,054 lane miles of roadway
 - Ferry system serving three terminals
 - Thun Field Airport (100,000 annual operations)
- Utility service provider
 - 165,000 wastewater customers
 - Stormwater and solid waste service provider for unincorporated county (pop. 345,940)

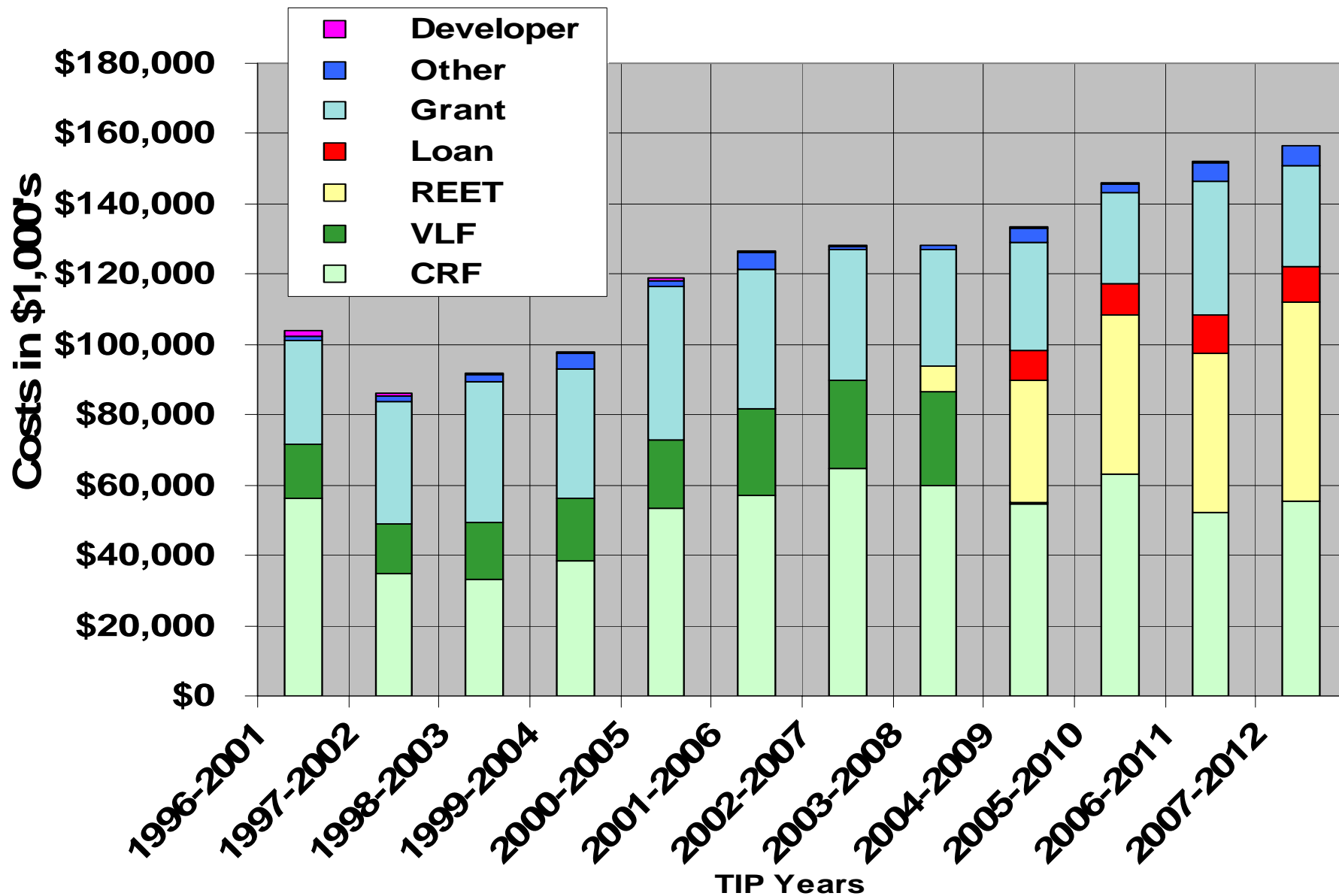
With Whom Do We Partner?

- Transportation
 - FHWA
 - PSRC
 - WSDOT
 - Cities and Towns
 - Pierce Transit / Sound Transit
 - Port of Tacoma
- Land Use
 - Citizens / Developers
 - Resource Agencies (Federal, state, local, tribal)
 - Realtors and Builders Assns.

Pierce County Transportation Revenues are Static



The Six Year TIP



Regional Governance

Advantages and Disadvantages

Recommended Structure

- Counties – The first regional government (1850's)
- MPO's - Regional collaboration on transportation planning (1960's)
- PTBA's – Transit investments outside cities (1960's)
- RTPPO's – Regional transportation coordination in rural areas too. (1990's)
- JRPC/ RTA / Sound Transit – High capacity transp. investments across county lines (1990's)

What does another layer of governance provide that is missing today?

Transportation and Land Use – How it works (A Rubick's Cube)

- Axis 1: Federal, state, regional, county, city, and PTBA players
- Axis 2: Transportation providers who conduct policy development, modal/area/system planning, STIP's/TIP's, then deliver projects through scoping/design/environmental/right-of-way/construction phases
- Axis 3: Land use regulators who develop countywide planning policies (CWPP), comprehensive plans, and development regulations

***Transportation and land use permitting
is generally vested in
county and city governments***

What Works?

- Mobility is up, accidents are down, our air and water is cleaner, and the economy is growing
- Level of citizen understanding and respect for local governments is relatively high
 - Citizens generally like the governance closest to them (The “Governance Proximity” Principle)
 - Desire for responsiveness and accountability.
- Regional coordination in Pierce County
 - Pierce Transit Board
 - Regional Access Mobility Partnership (RAMP)
 - Sound Transit Coordination
 - Project level coordination (SR 704, SR 167, Pierce County HOV’s, etc)

What Doesn't Work

- Regional coordination elsewhere (we read the papers too ...)
- Devolution of responsibility without authority or resources
- To some, the Land use/Transportation linkages appear to not be working, but they're working as designed and some don't like that.
- PTBA dependency on volatile sales tax revenues
- State support for transportation (Double every 20 years?)

What regional governance structures should RTC consider?

- Send money – not more government
- MOPIA objectives are under funded. PSRC estimates that Destination 2030 needs are under funded by \$29.4 billion (**after** the 2003 and 3005 Legislative packages)

Biggest challenges to regional governance in the Central Puget Sound?

- Not enough money – key MOPIA transportation objectives are under-funded
- Multiple transportation providers, but the system seems to work
- Implementing the coordinated vision, i.e., Destination 2030, for transit and roads
- Coordination of any new governance structure with the “governance” provided by PSRC
- Coordination of any new governance structure (i.e., merging?) with regional governance structures (e.g., RTID, Sound Transit)

***Do we know the specific problem
we’re trying to fix?***

Criteria and impacts to evaluate potential governance structures?

- Whether new revenues are part of the new governance (incentives to cooperate and coordinate are better than new requirements)
- Who sets the priorities for Maintenance, Operations, Preservation, Improvements, and Administration (MOPIA) of the various transportation modes?

Financial issues RTC should consider in a Central Puget Sound regional revenue plan?

- There isn't enough money to meet MOPIA priorities today, so don't take from existing financial mechanisms
- Provide new revenue sources to meet transportation growth needs, require cooperation to access new money
- Decide who sets the MOPIA priorities!
- Ensure consistency with the PSRC Growth Plan and local comprehensive plans

Impacts if a new regional entity assumed some of the local transit and transportation responsibilities?

- It would violate “The Governance Proximity” principle
- Depending on the transportation function “assumed” by a regional entity, it would add a layer of decision making to that process.
- For existing agencies (i.e., cities, counties, PTBA’s) that currently provide the full range of transportation services (i.e., MOPIA) it would segregate functions, reduce internal collaboration, introduce sources of “ball dropping”, and add overhead costs

Would the transportation benefits outweigh these additional cost sand risks?

One thought –

- If RTC follows their charge to –
“develop a proposal that includes an option for forming a permanent, directly elected regional transportation governing entity, as well as the governing entity's finance strategy, authorized revenue sources, and planning authority,”
- then the least impact to counties would occur if the scope of this governance change were limited to current and future state highways only.

Our Bottom Lines

- 1. If you must “recommend a new governance structure,” please exclude historical county road functions i.e., Maintenance, Operations, Preservation, Improvement, and Administration (MOPIA)***
- 2. We believe the county public we serve wants better transportation service and coordination of existing service, not more transportation government.***

The End

Questions?